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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Guantanamo Iraq - Camp David Talks
Latin America - Chavez's Limitations
PARIS - Tuesday, June 13, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Guantanamo
Iraq - Camp David Talks
Latin America - Chavez's Limitations

(B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Domestic stories dominate today's front pages, with the government's budget for 2007 prominently featured in Le Figaro and the announcement of 15,000 job cuts projected in the public sector.

In international news, the aftermath of the Guantanamo suicides leads afternoon left-of-center paper Le Monde to publish an editorial calling for the "closing of the detention camp," and commenting about the U.S., "which remains deaf to all arguments supporting the decision." La Croix's Gilles Biassette revisits Guantanamo's legal standing, the conditions of detention and the possible closing of the prison in an article entitled: "Guantanamo Embarrasses the Bush Administration." For Jean-Christophe Ploquin, Guantanamo is "one symbol too many." Liberation calls Guantanamo "A legal black hole." (See Part C) Liberation also interviews former U.S. Air Force legal advisor Scott Silliman who says "Washington does not know what to do with its detainees... It would like to have assurances from governments if they release them into their custody, but these claim they have no legal stand to keep them in prison..." He also believes Washington should close Guantanamo because "it is of little value to the U.S. government in terms of intelligence gathering..."

The Middle East, with Israeli PM Olmert's visit to Europe, including today's visit to Paris, and the latest violence in the Palestinian territories are major international stories. PM Olmert's interview with Le Figaro is entitled: "Putting an End to the Hamas Government." On Europe: "I want to develop a much closer relationship with Europe..." On Hamas and Abbas: "I hope for Abbas's sake he will be able to impose himself and force Hamas to adopt the proposals set by the Quartet... If he accomplishes all of this, then we can talk long-term strategy... I will do everything I can to strengthen Abbas's position..." On Jerusalem: "Jerusalem has been the capital of one nation throughout history. It will always remain so..." On the security wall: "The security wall will adapt to the boundaries..." On Iran: "The diplomatic initiative is a necessary step to find an answer. We are determined to keep Iran from acquiring the nuclear bomb... But we are not the main players in this issue. It is the responsibility of the major powers and the UN."

Le Figaro reports on the Camp David talks on Iraq (See Part C) and on Turkey's new step towards EU membership as talks began yesterday in Luxembourg: "This is the first and least contentious round of discussions, on science and research... But the question of the official recognition Cyprus is pending... and the EU is pressing Ankara to open its ports to Cypriot ships by the end of 2006 which would be a de facto recognition of the Republic by Turkey."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Guantanamo

"Closing Guantanamo"

Left-of-center Le Monde in its editorial (06/13): "The reaction of Rear Admiral Harris to the three suicides illustrates the gap that separates American officials and the rest of the world on Guantanamo. The same goes for Colleen Graffy's reaction when she said it was 'a publicity stunt...' We do not want to cover our face when it comes to what needs to be done to deal with terrorism, but we would like to make the U.S. understand that Guantanamo has become a black stain in the democratic world... America's blindness when it comes to the detainees... exposes all democracies to Islamic propaganda and radicalization... It was not enough to clamor that Guantanamo is a legal absurdity, that it is a violation of human rights... It was not enough to underscore the errors of History in matters of detention, from Japanese war camps... to Thatcher's stubbornness over the IRA hunger strikers. The U.S. remains deaf to all our arguments. The least that European leaders can do is, every time they attend a high level meeting with American officers, demand

the closing of Guantanamo. Angela Merkel recently showed the way. The French must follow."

"One Symbol Too Many"

Jean-Christophe Ploquin in Catholic La Croix (06/13): "Guantanamo has become the tip of the iceberg. Visible but secret, the prison stands as a symbol to a state of mind which ignores international and American law. It is the symbol of an excessive fight which has gone too far, as witnessed by what went on at Abu Ghraib... It is impossible to say whether the detention of the hundreds of individuals at Guantanamo has prevented other terrorist attacks or enabled terrorist networks to be dismantled. But it seems obvious that after four years, either the information has been collected, or it has lost pertinence... The question is what to do with these prisoners who may have become more dangerous since their captivity? The only way out is to get out of the legal no man's land that they are in. As for Europe, a willing partner in the fight against terrorism, it should not turn away from this time bomb that continues to fuel the fires of hatred towards the West inside the Muslim world. Several European countries have shown themselves to be shamefully weak by authorizing the CIA rendition flights."

"A Legal Black Hole"

Pascal Riche in left-of-center Liberation (06/13): "The international community is calling for the closing of the detention center... Meanwhile American authorities at Guantanamo have not shone with humanity in their comments... A State Department official, Colleen Graffy, stood out when she said that the suicides were a 'good PR move.'"

Iraq - Camp David Talks

"American War Council on Iraq"

Philippe Gelie in right-of-center Le Figaro (06/13): "It is truly a war council that George W. Bush has been holding at Camp David since yesterday... One noteworthy addition to these meetings is the presence of independent experts... The difficulties in controlling the militia and the slowness of reconstruction are the two dark shadows that Washington and Baghdad are hoping to work out, especially since the disappearance of Zarkawi... For Bush, the possibility of pulling American troops from Iraq is considered a tangential outcome of the talks, even if officially, the topic is not on the agenda."

Latin America - Chavez's Limitations

"Chavez's Proselytism Has Limitations"

Pierre Rousselin in right-of-center Le Figaro (06/13): "The unleashed Chavez wave has crashed in Peru. Despite his oil dollars, Chavez was not able to get his man elected... In Nicaragua, his money may not suffice either in next fall's elections... Chavez claims to want to rid Latin America of American imperialism. But asking Latin America to give up agreements, which open up the North American market, in exchange for a revolutionary mirage makes no sense... While there is no love lost between the Latin Americans and the U.S., the former know where their interests lie... American diplomacy, which is otherwise engaged with Iraq, Iran, the Middle East and Russia, has no other choice but to let things be in Latin America. Especially as long as Chavez's rhetoric does not keep him from supplying oil to the U.S. ... Humala's victory in Peru would have created an anti-American block. This has now been compromised. And the U.S. can feel relieved, especially considering the support Caracas has given Iran on its nuclear program." STAPLETON